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SUBJECT: MINISTER HAILS POLISH FOREIGN POLICY PRAGMATISM,
SUCCESSES

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Sikorski's annual report to parliament highlighted improved relations with Germany, a pragmatic conversation with Russia, new influence within the EU, and expectations of strategic cooperation with the U.S. Poland's EU initiatives over the last year produced the Eastern Partnership, an easing of emissions ceilings, and a new emphasis on energy security. Sikorski lamented Poland's continued exclusion from the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, but called the Polish-American Alliance a pillar of Polish security. He hailed the Missile Defense (MD) Agreement, and noted that whatever the U.S. decision on MD, the GOP expects to move forward with the linked Declaration of Strategic Cooperation -- and deployment of a Patriot missile battery in Poland. Sikorski pledged to redouble efforts in the fight against terrorism in the name of Piotr Stanczak, the engineer murdered last weekend in Pakistan. Stanczak's murder may have buoyed public support for Polish participation in ISAF. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) In his annual report to the Sejm (the lower house of parliament), Foreign Minister Sikorski pointed to the growing effectiveness of Polish foreign policy, particularly within the EU. He noted Polish success putting together an EU summit on the Georgia conflict; advancing the EU's Eastern Partnership; and ensuring that on energy security, the EU now speaks "in the Polish language." With the Prime Minister looking on, Sikorski acclaimed Tusk's gathering of Central and Southern European leaders in December in a successful effort to ease EU gas emission ceilings, an effort that will reduce the cost of Polish industrial modifications.

¶3. (U) On Russia, Sikorski said Poland's pragmatic stance showed that you can have a conversation without backing down, and he reiterated the call for a bilateral relationship based within a framework of EU rules. He cited improved relations with Germany -- Poland's main partner within the EU -- the withdrawal of Polish troops from Iraq while preserving strong ties to Iraq and the U.S., and the Missile Defense (MD) agreement with the U.S., which was accompanied by a Declaration on Strategic Cooperation which will lift bilateral dialogue to the strategic level.

¶4. (U) Sikorski's shorter list of foreign policy failures included the joint EU failure to implement the Lisbon Treaty. He said the Treaty is important externally, to ensure Europe speaks effectively with one voice, and internally, to maximize cooperation within the EU. Poland also failed, together with the U.S., to obtain a NATO Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia, and to obtain access to the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (while Australia and Canada granted visa-free travel to Poles over the last year).

¶5. (U) Sikorski described the most painful, recent failure -- to win the release of the Polish engineer murdered by the

Taliban in Pakistan. He said the GoP had consciously avoided publicity surrounding efforts for the release of Piotr Stanczak, but there had been "dozens of visits, hundreds of meetings and thousands of phone calls." Sikorski pledged that the GoP will use all possible means not only to punish Stanczak's killers, but to pursue the fight against terrorism in his name.

¶6. (U) The pillars of Polish security, according to Sikorski, are NATO, the EU, and bilateral relationships, particularly with the U.S. NATO needs an updated strategic concept, one that balances external missions with the defense of Alliance territories. The EU is building defense capabilities. The U.S., under the new administration, can quickly renew its leadership on a sound and democratic basis. The fate of Missile Defense is up to the U.S. to decide, but "regardless of that decision... we expect implementation of the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation."

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: Sikorski reiterated GoP willingness to wait patiently for the U.S. decision on MD, but made it clearer than ever that the Poles expect implementation of the Declaration of Strategic Cooperation that accompanied the Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement (BMDA), whether we go forward with the Polish MD interceptor site or not. For the Poles, the Declaration means above all the deployment of a battery of Patriot missiles in Poland, as well as a Strategic Dialogue to be pursued at a higher level than in the past.

¶8. (SBU) COMMENT, CONTINUED: An Embassy contact who contributed to Sikorski's speech told the DCM that the Foreign Minister penned in language about pursuing the fight against terrorism with all available means, in honor of

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Stanczak. In our contact's view, this was vintage Sikorski, emotionally blazing a risky trail because of his longstanding personal involvement in Afghanistan. For now, however, Sikorski's position is a popular one: although a year ago most Poles opposed the presence of a Polish military contingent in Afghanistan, a recent poll showed that only 10% of respondents favor withdrawal. Polish anger over Stanczak's murder may have stoked greater support for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.
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